

The War Paper for Women

VOTES FOR WOMEN

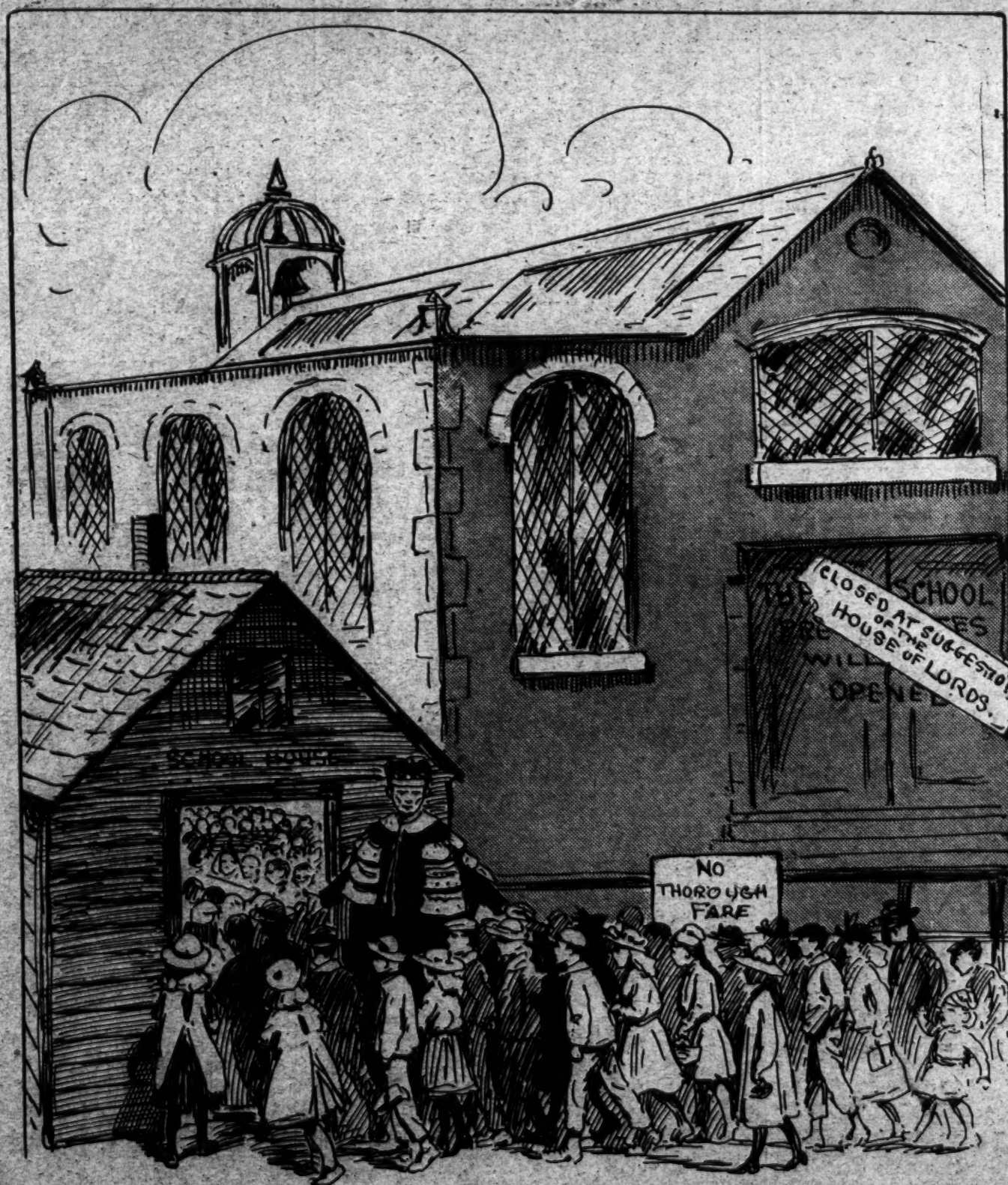
OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

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PENNY WISE IS POUND FOOLISH



In the debate on National Economy in the House of Lords last week, several speakers deprecated the growing expenditure on education and on proper accommodation for elementary school-children. We do not doubt that much public money is wasted, but the mental and physical health of the coming generation is the last thing a nation can afford to "economize" on. What is wanted to prevent REAL waste is women's help in the conduct of public affairs.

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DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper

THE OUTLOOK

We continue to receive protests against the compulsory registration of voteless women. One correspondent asks us if we think it would be well for all Suffragists to add to the form some such declaration as this: "As women have no vote, I do not intend to volunteer for any work until it is given." This correspondent mentions that she "would never lift one finger to obtain the vote by violence." Another Suffragist asks us if we favour the formula: "I am skilled enough to vote, and if I am worth registration, I am worth enfranchisement." Our answer to all such suggestions was given in our last week's leading article and "Outlook."

Forms of Service

We share to the full the passionate indignation which liberty lovers all over the country must necessarily feel at the compulsion of the voteless; we urged the Government from the first to do what only the Government can do—to remove, by the enfranchisement of women, the shame which is clogging the nation's progress. We warned the Government of the indignation they would arouse, of the harm they would do to national unity. But we do not urge Suffragists to return any one specified answer under the Act, because we recognise the urgency in a time of national crisis, when so many of our best men are in danger, of the differences between the claims of one individual conscience and another. All Suffragists are agreed in the desire to serve the best interests of the nation. Some—we need mention only the doctors—are directly helping in the conduct of the war; but many of the most passionately patriotic, who would give everything for their country, feel that they serve their country best by concentrating on the demand for the vote—by granting which, the Government would prove their boasted love of that liberty for which so many men are dying on the field of battle. This, as we know and as our readers know, is the fact; it is for the Government to meet it. We have persistently, in the interests of the whole nation, called the attention of the Government to the fact, and we repeat our demand to them to meet it in the only patriotic way, and to unite the nation in liberty and service. All Suffragists, whatever work they do as individuals, must continue to press for Suffrage.

Post Office and Women

In an interview with a representative of the *Daily News and Leader*, Mr. Stuart, the Secretary of the Postmen's Federation, has drawn attention to the hostility awakened among male postal servants by the introduction of female labour at low wages. Mr. Herbert Samuel outlined last week in the House of Commons some plans for releasing men for enlistment from the postal service, and Mr. Stuart commented: "With the single exception of the conditions of wages of female labour there is not likely to be any objection raised to the new proposals." We can understand

this exception when we read of a Treasury circular "which lays down a maximum of 25s. for women doing the most responsible work," and of the substitution of women for skilled men whose salaries rise to £300 a year. Another disgrace in connection with the Post Office is the decision just made by the arbitrator, Sir James Wodehouse, on the claim for a war bonus. Men postal servants are to receive 3s. or 2s. a week bonus, according to their present wages—and women "half the above bonuses." How long till women shall, by their votes, stop this shameful discrimination?

National Economy

Last week's debate on economy in the House of Lords revealed some very antiquated notions of what economy consists in. Women, who look to the future, will be the first to deny that there is either sense or patriotism in "skipping" on urgent national needs, such as education, just because we are pouring out money at the rate of three millions a day in war. To bring up children in over-crowded or inadequate schoolrooms (and there are scores of school-buildings in London alone which do not meet the Board of Education requirements) is not, even from the narrowest point of view, patriotic or economical: it costs the country more in the long run. After all, the children's health is the actual capital of the nation. Lord St. Aldwyn, if the newspaper reports do not do him an injustice, seems even to have implied regret that "they could not get rid, however much they might criticize, of such great items of expenditure as . . . the growth of education." Lord Haldane, who has always been a true friend to education, said—and we agree with him—that "they had no money to waste on fine buildings, but they must get efficient teaching for the children on whom the country would depend." Nobody wants "fine" (in the sense of the extravagant) buildings: what is wanted is healthy and roomy buildings. (Our cartoon this week calls attention to that need). There is a certain pathos in remembering how the National Union of Teachers has always been told by Ministers that its demands for a decent scale of salaries were impossible to meet, because they would cost 6½ millions a year—just about what we are spending three times over in every week of war!

Notification of Births

Satisfaction will be felt among Suffragists that a Bill is at last on its way through Parliament which will render compulsory in all districts the notification of births. So far the notification (under the Act of 1907) has been only optional, and some twenty per cent. of the population have, owing to the action—or rather lack of action—of the local authorities, failed to come under it. Mr. Long, in the second reading debate on the present Bill, tells us that it is proposed "to pave the way by this Bill for doing something to improve the health of mothers and young children." It may seem ungracious to greet such admirable intentions with the remark: "At last!"—but Suffragists may be pardoned a little bitterness when they see how slowly reforms are brought about which the enlightened womanhood of the country has been demanding for years.

War Work in France

An eloquent letter by the Rev. H. B. Chapman, in last Monday's *Times*, called attention to the work which women were doing in France to fill the places of men, and paid a fine tribute to "the sex intended by Heaven to constitute the soul of humanity." One is reminded of Goethe's: "The eternal feminine draws us upward and on." But men have their share of the soul of humanity, and women have bodies

as well as souls: and we cannot help thinking that Mr. Chapman—whose courageous services to our cause none of us are likely to forget—was saying something different from what he meant when he wrote of the French women and their work: "All this they are ready to do *sans bénéfice*, though if they earn in the process, they are grateful, and save every penny for the conduct of the war." If this were literally true, it would mean that Frenchwomen lived upon air, and made use of that faculty to lower the standard of life which the men after the war will have to take up. Surely Mr. Chapman agrees with us that women filling men's places ought to get men's wages, so that they may not by undercutting lay up an evil legacy for the heroes who return when war is over?

In Memoriam

We deeply regret to have to record that Mrs. Mabel Dearmer, the well-known author, has died in Serbia of enteric fever. Mrs. Dearmer was known to a large circle by the charm of her writings, especially, perhaps, by her plays for children. She was, of course, a Suffragist, and her husband, Dr. Percy Dearmer, has often, as our readers know, written and spoken most eloquently and courageously for the Cause. We venture to add our tribute to the many which Mrs. Dearmer's heroism in carrying succour to a stricken country at the cost of her own life has called forth, and to Dr. Dearmer we tender our respectful sympathy.

Items of Interest

The threatened strike of Hull tramwaymen over the employment of women conductors has been abandoned, at any rate temporarily, and it is hoped that the dispute may be satisfactorily settled.

Birmingham has decided to employ women conductors on the tramways. They will do the same work as men-conductors and be paid the same rate per hour, but their hours of work will be limited to an average of seven a day.

The Theatres Committee of the L.C.C. has decided not to object to competent women as cinematograph operators.

The Hon. Maude Laurence and Miss Muriel Talbot have been appointed as members of the Advisory Committee to consider applications from alien enemies for exemption from repatriation. The majority of the applicants are women.

Two important meetings on the subject of women's position in war-time are shortly to be held, by the Northern Men's Federation and the Forward Cymric Union respectively:—

Sunday afternoon next is to be the occasion of a unique demonstration on the part of the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage. The members of various branches are to foregather in the Edinburgh Meadows at 3 p.m. to speak upon the subject of war in its relation to women. The Federation, it will be remembered, was formed from the deputation of Municipal men who went to London on July 18, 1913, to interview Mr. Asquith, and were rejected. Therefore, Sunday's demonstration is in the nature of a political birthday. Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett, the President and Founder, will go from London especially to address the meeting. Many of the Edinburgh members, including Councillors Crawford and Cameron, J.P., and others are serving with the army either at the front or at home, and will, unfortunately, not be able to attend, but there is a fine list of speakers (for which see our advertisement columns). There are to be three platforms, and banners flying. The meeting is to be non-contentious, and is held merely to demonstrate the near relation of war to women and the need of unity between man and woman to avert war in the future.

The following is part of the resolution which will be put to the demonstration to be held by the Forward Cymric Suffrage Union in Hyde Park on Sunday, July 18:—

(1) That this mass meeting demands that where women are called on for war service they shall receive the same pay, whether for piece or time rates, as the men whom they replace, and further insists that the principle of equal pay for equal work shall be established throughout the entire field of industry.

(2) That the Parliamentary Vote shall be extended to women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men.

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NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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EDINBURGH.

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Mrs. ARNCLIFFE BENNETT (President N.M.F.),
Councillor BARRIE, Councillor GRAHAM, M.A.,
Mr. J. McMICHAEL, J.P. Mr. JAMES BRUNTON.

Chair: Mr. J. WILSON McLAREN.

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Speakers:

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cillor HAMILTON BROWN, J.P. Councillor
CHARLTON. Mr. T. SHAW.

Chair: Mr. ILLINGWORTH.

BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

"Day Dawns."

Speakers:

Mr. ANDREW YOUNG, M.A. Ex-Councillor COLBRON,
Mrs. FINLAYSON GAULD. Mr. HENRY DRUM-
MOND. Parish Councillor MILLAR.

Chair: Mr. ROBERT GAUL (Berwick-on-Tweed).

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FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1915.

THE WAR PENSIONS BILL

In a time of crisis like the present there is always the danger of having imposed upon us hasty and ill-considered legislation. The public do not attend much to what Parliament is doing, because naturally their thoughts are directed towards the great conflict between the nations. In emergency legislation dealing with the immediate problems of the war the evil is not so great, as the enactments are but temporary, dealing with specific things, and the same rapid machinery that brought them into being can as quickly amend their faults. But we must enter an emphatic protest against the application of these emergency methods to legislation which will continue in being after the war is over.

An instance of this kind of legislation is afforded by the Naval and Military War Pensions Bill—a Bill as we go to press, which, at the present rate of public business, may almost be an Act by the time we appear in print! This measure sets up a Statutory Committee of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, which will have a general supervisory control over the administration of naval and military pensions, of separation allowances to various kinds of dependents, and of the allotment of grants from funds contributed by charity. It has also to provide for the health, training, and employment of disabled officers and men. Its financial arrangements are vague. Apparently the first claim the Committee will have on public money is for the purpose of providing a salary for its chairman. For its main objects it has to rely largely on the contributions of the charitable. But we are calmly told in the House by Mr. Hayes Fisher "that there may be an amending Bill some day, when we have seen how this Bill works." This is a panic method in *excelsis*.

We feel sure that Suffragists will criticise the measure in many ways. The principle of the Bill is wrong. Our soldiers have given of their best, and any financial provisions that are made for them or their dependents should not be conditioned by charitable subscriptions, but should be a direct charge on the revenues of the State.

Suffragists have also consistently protested against the tendency to appoint irresponsible committees, armed with inquisitorial powers, for the purpose of investigating into the lives

of other people. The soldier's voteless dependent, though the soldier gave all he could for his country, is to be at the mercy of a Statutory Committee with no responsibility to her for its actions. When the war is over and party strife again shows itself in the country, the officer or private who considers himself aggrieved will be able, because he is a voter, or potential voter, to obtain the ear of a member of Parliament. But what Government or Opposition Whip will trouble about the grievance of a woman who cannot affect the result of a single bye-election?

Suffragists also cannot but be profoundly dissatisfied with the way in which women are treated in the matter of the appointment of the Committee itself. This body will have a large say in separation allowances, which means that a great number of women will be committed to its care. We should have expected that in a measure of this character provision would have been made for at least half the membership of the Committee to be composed of women. Further, some arrangement should have been made whereby the women particularly interested should have a share of the representation. Other bodies supposed to have an interest get their representation, but not the women. Labour naturally claimed a share, and was met in its demand. The male Trade Union vote is an important element at election times. As for women, they can be thankful that it has been decided that of the members to be appointed by the Crown "some shall be women" instead of the original "not less than two." But to this principle of appointment there is the strongest objection from a Suffragist standpoint. The Crown means the Government of the day. Therefore women will be appointed on a Committee, the majority of whose members will be men, dealing with women, administering funds partly subscribed by women, by a body of men in the Cabinet, responsible only to men, and ignorant of the desires or needs of the women affected by the Bill. This is a vicious method.

The whole Bill is a hotch-potch. It will cause endless friction. It is ill-considered legislation with a vengeance.

It is possible that at this moment our protest will pass unheeded. It, however, should convince Suffragists of the need for pressing their claims for the vote now. That is imperative. A piece of legislation like this shows the absolute need of woman having the political weapon at her disposal to protect her position when this war has ceased. It will only be the pressure exercised by enfranchised women that will produce Mr. Hayes Fisher's expected Amending Bill in a satisfactory form.

In answer to our contentions, it may be said that the Committee will have smaller powers than we have indicated, since, under the clause defining its functions, the payment of pensions or grants to widows and children is expressly excluded. To this we would reply that, over and above the functions definitely allotted to it, the Committee is to determine *any other questions* in relation to pensions or grants or separation allowances which may be referred to it by the Admiralty or Army Council. The Committee cannot, of course, alter the definite scale fixed by Act of Parliament for clear straightforward cases; but by its decision of "questions of fact" in doubtful cases, added to the power just mentioned, it will have almost unlimited influence on our national life.

Would such a Bill pass if women had votes?

AN OLD FABLE RE-TOLD

BY T. O'MEARA

A Countrywoman was trudging one day along an uphill road, and she bore upon her back many grievous burdens, such as Low Wages, Industrial Disorganisation, Economic Dependence and Legal Inequality. And she met a Countryman, who drove a sturdy Donkey laden with a pack; and he said to her, "Mornin', mum; and where may you be off to, now, with that little lot!"

And the Countrywoman answered, "In truth, I am going to get me a stout beast of burden, like yours; and he will bear my load for me, for I have carried it a weary way, and my back aches."

Whereat the Countryman pursed up his lips and whistled; and he said, "Garn! There ain't never been no donkeys for the likes o' you, not likely!"

"There's going to be one now, anyway," replied the Countrywoman, cheerily. "He's waiting for me on the far side of the Parliament House, and his name is Bill; and he is snow white, with a beautiful harness, all purple and red and orange and green."

"And how d'yer suppose you'll ever be able to drive him, eh?" demanded the Countryman, gathering up his own reins.

"I shall learn, as you have learnt," said the Countrywoman; and the Countryman burst into a guffaw, and cried:

"Well, mum, if you take *my* advice, you'll go home an' do yer washing!"

The Countrywoman made no reply, but continued her journey.

And presently she met a Lady in a Crinoline, who walked very daintily and carried no burdens; and the Lady in the Crinoline cried out, "Fie upon you, unwomanly creature! To go trapesing in all weathers along the roads, spoiling your complexion so that no man will look twice at you! If you take *my* advice, you will go home and put on some cold cream."

The Countrywoman said nothing, but continued her journey.

And presently she met a Lady in a Sealskin Coat, driving in an Elegant Motor-car, who leaned out to say to her, "I call it disgraceful, this shirking of your natural duties! It's pure Decadence, that's what it is. Don't you know that you are born to carry burdens! Don't you know that you should find a delight in them! If you take *my* advice, you'll find something else to think about."

The Countrywoman said nothing, but continued her journey.

And presently she met a Lean and Meagre Person, who plucked her by the sleeve and said, "Dear lady, I am in perfect sympathy with you, but before you go further, there is one vastly important question to be solved."

"What's that?" inquired the Countrywoman, pausing, with a sigh, to adjust the straps of her burden.

The Lean and Meagre Person approached a little nearer and dropped his voice to a whisper. "The question," he said, "is whether Eve or Adam took first bite of the apple?"

"Suppose you go and ask them!" suggested the Countrywoman, patiently, as one might humour a sick child.

"I did," said the Lean and Meagre Person, flushing a little. "But they are very rude young people. Eve told me to mind my own silly business, and Adam told me to go to the—er—the serpent. And it is so very necessary that the question should be thoroughly threshed out. Dear lady—if you please—no, don't go!"

The Countrywoman made no reply, but continued her journey.

And presently she met a Politician, who said, "My good woman, you are making yourself very hot and uncomfortable for nothing. Pray, sit down under the shade of this refreshing fruit tree, and I will bring the beast of burden to you. Now, be advised for your own good."

The Countrywoman said nothing, but continued her journey.

And presently there arose a great hubbub at the side of the road; and the Countrywoman found herself assailed with flying missiles; and she could see nothing but a great cloud of dust and smoke, from which excited voices called to her, "Hi, stop! We're at war, we are! We're making a noise! We're making a mess! There never was such a mess in the world before! Look! look!"

"I hear you," said the Countrywoman, and continued her journey.

And presently she met a Flapper with a Bunch of White Feathers, who ran beside her, saying, "Come and help me stick these into all the in-offensive youths afflicted with varicose veins and tuberculosis that we may meet."

The Countrywoman shook her head, but made no reply.

"But," exclaimed the Flapper, amazed, "your King and Country need you!"

"They do indeed," said the Countrywoman, and continued her journey.

And presently a Fussy Little Man bounced out at her, screaming, "Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers! Come and help!"

"Ah!" said the Countrywoman, "but if

Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers, what about the sweated shirts that step-sister Sarah sews? And I've promised poor Sarah a nice ride on my donkey!"

"If you take *my* advice, you'll give up all thoughts of that donkey," said the Fussy Little Man, and departed in dudgeon.

The Countrywoman continued her journey.

And, lo and behold! after a while the Countrywoman came down the road again, walking upright and proudly; and she led a little white donkey, and his name was Bill, and his harness was purple and red and green and orange, even as she had said. And he bore all her burdens, and many more beside, and never felt the weight of them. And the Countryman, and the Lady in the Crinoline, and the Lady in Sealskin, and the Lean and Meagre Person, and the Combatants, and the Flapper with the Feathers, and the Fussy Little Man, all stood in the road to watch her go by. And they cried with one accord, "There, now, didn't we all say she would be much better off if she had a nice little donkey to carry that load for her?"

And the Politician stood bowing and smiling, hoping for the favour of a ride. . . . But the Countrywoman took no notice of him, and continued her journey.

"FRIENDS" AND THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT *

The principle followed by the Society of Friends to the present day, to be guided not by "majority rule" but by the sense of the community, marks conspicuously the democratic idealism of that movement which had its great rising in the iron time of Puritanism.

When the State under the Parliamentarians affirmed that Democracy, like its Deity, was exclusively masculine, it suffered a "stroke" the result of which has been partial paralysis ever since. The pious translators of the Bible, in the Authorised Version, had led the way. Corruptly translating as "rib" a word of which "half" would be the more correct reading (thus leaving in Adam's side a gaping wound which has not yet been healed), they secured among the ignorant the warrant of Holy Scripture for putting woman in her proper and subordinate place. And there, holding her to the text, the Old Testament pietism of the day was resolutely keeping her, when that movement for a truer ideal of democracy, affirming the essential equality of the sexes, and commonly known as "Quakerism," awoke to the light of heaven and drew strength from the evil conditions which lay around it. Quite obviously it quickened, grew strong, and prospered on the persecution with which it was immediately assailed; and the history of Quakerism in the seventeenth century is but a forecast in all essentials of the Suffrage movement of to-day.

For the revolt of human nature against unjust government is immutable in its character. It goes constantly on similar lines, and the resistance of unjust government to human nature is always marked by the same dogged stupidity, leading finally to confessed failure and capitulation to a spirit which does not depend on numbers or on majorities.

And so in Miss Brailsford's history of "Quaker Women" we find passages and incidents which, with only a change of names, might be the record of our own fight for the democratic ideal during the last few years. We read of unjust magistrates straining and breaking the law to convict offenders who oppose to its letter a spirit that is unbreakable. We see women (and men also) separating from custom and convention in pursuit of the new ideal, entering the

prisons and reforming them by their mere presence and example; going on pilgrimages, in some cases long sea voyages, in order to be with others where persecution is most rife, and where the penalty, merely for their existence as Quakers, is torture or death. We see them going to gaol "for speaking to a minister," we see them personally presenting their petitions to the King, and we see them at last, after infinite indignity and suffering, courageously and happily borne, receiving from a hostile and reluctant Government the recognition of their right to exist in their own way, and to be free like their rulers, having meanwhile achieved by their endurance a far more real freedom and enfranchisement than theirs.

And all this history leads on through the scorn and callousness of rulers, the shocked and angry scoldings of the clergy, the spitting and revilings of the mob, the universal charge of "unwomanliness" and of minds unbalanced and hysterical—all this leads on to the recognition and acceptance of a new type, the Quaker woman, the quintessence, as she is considered now, of all gentle, womanly, and homely qualities.

That type, as we have it to look back upon to-day, was the product of the woman's earlier democratic struggle two-and-a-half centuries ago. In achieving it she was not always gentle with her tongue, even though she did no violence. Set upon by the students of Cambridge, Mary Fisher spoke her mind to them in home truths which they did not relish. Observing the "froth and levity of their behaviour," she told them "that they were Anti-Christ, that their college was a cage of unclean birds and a synagogue of Satan." And there is a touch of literary polish about her rhetoric, which shows that she enjoyed saying it. For that and like conduct she was stripped and flogged in the marketplace, and, preserving through it all a steadfast countenance, invited the executioner when he had done to begin over again—"if you think," she said, "that you have not done enough."

There was the spirit which made victory sure. For in a spiritual movement it does not matter what majority is against it. What does essentially matter is the spirit of the majority within. That is its true test of life.

L. H.

* "Quaker Women." By M. R. Brailsford. (London: Duckworth & Co. Price 7s. 6d. net.)

U.S. SUMMER CAMPAIGN

SPECIAL CONFERENCES

The fourth meeting of the series was held on July 8 at the Portman Rooms, and on that occasion Mr. George Lansbury was the speaker and Mrs. Ayrton Gould took the chair. There was only one speaker, as on the previous occasions, when there had been two, there had not been sufficient time for the very lively discussion which always took place.

Mrs. Gould made a few opening remarks upon the Registration Bill, which was then in committee, and she also drew attention to the great danger of allowing the Suffrage position to slip back in any way during the war, pointing out that if at the end of the war the women's movement had not advanced, it would have fallen back at least fifty years. Mrs. Gould then called upon Mr. George Lansbury to speak upon the organisation of women's work, with special reference to the Registration Bill.

Mr. Lansbury said so far as the Register Bill was concerned, women would now be included. Although Mr. Walter Long had declared that women had asked for inclusion, it was perfectly certain that until women had a Parliamentary vote no one in Parliament had any right to speak on their behalf. And anyhow, there was not much need for a Register, for women were working as they always are working, either in war time or peace time, and the problems to be considered in the future in connection with the expansion of their labour were urgent and important.

On the railways, in armament works, and, in fact, in almost every industry where women were displacing men or taking the places of men, lower wages were being paid. This fact was creating a problem which appeared almost insoluble, for at the end of the war we should be faced with millions of men and women being discharged from munitions work and millions of men returning from the war, with very little capital available to start new industries, and men undoubtedly would fight very hard indeed to drive women out of the industrial market. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that women should join the great Trade Union movement, and by co-operation with the men try to arrive at some kind of arrangement by which these evils could be met and overcome.

We must also remember that all the social evils which were existent before the war still existed, that nothing had changed in our social order; at least, there had been much less change in regard to women than in any other department of life. And, secondly, there was as much urgency to-day in the demand for the vote as twelve months ago. All the questions connected with the nationalisation of industry and the demand for national service were all just so many reasons why women should be enfranchised. It was a monstrous injustice if any Government, or any set of public officials, were to have the power to order and control the lives of women without women being able to have an effective voice or vote in controlling either Government or its officials.

HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN OUR REGISTER

"One volunteer is worth five (or was it fifty?) pressed men." This truth was so familiar to our fathers that it passed into a proverb. Can it be that we to-day are in danger of forgetting the wisdom of our fathers?

We do not claim to compete with the Government's compulsory register in the matter of bulk, but our register of holiday work is at least a perfect example of the voluntary system. Our paper-sellers are people whose desire to

"serve their country" is so strong as to make them overleap the barriers of convention and follow the lead of their own conscience.

Miss Peacock writes from Southsea: "The first of a series of cycling Suffrage meetings was held on Saturday, July 10. Several members of various Suffrage Societies united under the colours of the U.S. and cycled out from Portsmouth to Wickham, a village about ten miles away, and, after having tea, held a Suffrage meeting in the large square, first of all walking through the village and distributing the handbill, 'Why We Keep the Flag Flying' to the villagers and in the cottages. A visit was paid to the schoolmaster's house, and a bill left there with a message that a meeting was to be held shortly. Miss Nora O'Shea then spoke for about an hour to a quiet and seemingly interested audience. A question put by a soldier, as to whether women would not be doing better by 'comforting the men who were fighting in France' than by coming there and asking for a vote (which he characterised as 'atrocious'), gave Miss O'Shea an opening which she availed herself of finely. Copies of VOTES FOR WOMEN were sold, and we left very well satisfied with our first attempt. The next meeting will be held at Rowlands Castle on July 24."

This good result ought to encourage others. Especially good is the way in which the police prohibition was evaded, by holding the meetings in outside districts. Here appears the triumphant resourcefulness of the Suffragette as strongly as ever. By this spirit we shall conquer!

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COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

LIGHT SENTENCES

Assault on a Little Girl

The *Shrewsbury Chronicle* (July 2) reports case of a labourer charged at the Ludlow County Police Court with an indecent assault upon a little Belgian girl aged eight years. The doctor stated that he had found no evidence of criminal assault. The chairman said that the Bench were quite satisfied with the evidence; it was a serious offence, and more particularly against Belgian children, who were here for protection.

Sentence: Six months' hard labour.

Assault on a Boy

The *Chester Chronicle* (July 10) reports case of a labourer charged at the Chester Assizes with an offence against a boy. He pleaded guilty, but counsel for defence asked for his good character to be taken into consideration. The judge said that if there was one class of offender judges could have no patience with it was the corruptor of boys.

Sentence: Nine months' hard labour.

HEAVY SENTENCES

In Possession of House-breaking Implements

The *Morning Advertiser* (July 5) reports case of a gardener charged at the Middlesex Sessions with being found by night in possession of house-breaking implements.

Sentence: Three-and-a-half years' penal servitude.

Theft

The *Morning Advertiser* (June 24) reports case of a baker charged at the London Sessions with breaking into a flat and stealing a gold watch and other articles.

Sentence: Eighteen months' hard labour.

Once more we have to call attention to the disproportion of sentences, under English law administered by English judges and magistrates, as between offences against the person and offences against property. It is a subject we would only too willingly abandon if our duty would let us do so; it is a nauseating subject, and the cases we have to print are such that there is the very strongest temptation for sensitive people to ignore them. But silence is the ally of sin. So long as such cases are ignored, so long as such contrasts are not pointed, the same conditions will prevail; indeed, we have little hope of ever seeing any change for the better in this connection unless and until women are enfranchised, and are found, not only at the polling booth, but in the jury-box and on the bench. The crying evil to which week by week we draw attention is the result of a state of

civilisation which places a maximum value on material things and a minimum value on human life—a mistake to which women, who know what it costs to produce human life, will never be prone. We make, therefore, no apology for insisting on the appalling facts. If they are done, they should be spoken of—to the end that they may be altered. We should like to catechise the chief makers and administrators of our laws, to ask them the point-blank question whether they really believe the corruption of a child to be a less serious thing than house-breaking. We cannot believe they would confess to believing that, and yet the operations of the law point weekly to the apparent holding by responsible people of that belief. We are aware that such comparisons as the above raise the whole question of whether punishment is ever of use for anything, of whether the whole social

question should not be more broadly tackled. Into that we cannot go here: our point is in the comparison of sentences, the comparative value set by the law on person and property.

COMING EVENTS

The United Suffragists will hold a public meeting in the small Portman Rooms, Baker Street, W., on Thursday, July 15, from 3 to 5 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence. Chair: Mr. John Seurr. Admission free.

The Forward Cymric Suffrage Union will hold a demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday, July 18, at 5 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Mansell-Moullin, Rev. Drew Roberts, Mrs. Wynne Nevinston, and others.

The Northern Men's Federation will hold a mass meeting on the Edinburgh Meadows on Sunday, July 18, at 3 p.m.

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